

AMENDMENTS TO THE CLAIMS:

This listing of claims will replace all prior versions, and listings, of claims in the application:

LISTING OF CLAIMS:

1-8. (canceled)

9. (currently amended) Box for a set of electric storage batteries, ~~comprising~~ consisting essentially of:

~~at least~~ two side walls (12, 14) extending parallel and defining between themselves a housing for receiving the plural batteries on each of a plurality of horizontal levels; [[,]]

the side walls (12, 14) consisting of an assembly of vertically stacked modules (16), each module comprising a pair of wall elements (18, 20) mounted opposite each other, wherein,

each of the pair of wall elements (18, 20) are two horizontally opposed wall elements (18, 20) together forming a floor support for the batteries stored therebetween,

each of the two horizontally opposed wall elements form at least part of the [[a]] floor support for one edge of each battery stored therebetween,

the two horizontally opposed wall elements are separated from each other by an intervening air space so that the two horizontally opposed wall elements support each battery by opposite base edges of the battery with a base area of the

battery between the opposite edges unsupported and exposed to the intervening air space,

each wall element (18, 20) is in the form of a U section with folded edges that define parallel arms (22, 24) pointing inwards into the box toward corresponding coplanar arms of another wall element, the arms of each wall element being spaced apart, by the intervening air space, from the coplanar arms of the another wall element,

the U sections are directly stacked on another U section, and

the lower arm of the each U section and the lower arm of the another U section together form one of the horizontal levels of the floor support for the batteries,

the upper arm of the U section of each wall element abuts the lower arm of the U section of a vertically adjacent wall element and provides a resulting horizontal level of the floor supports having a thickness defined by the abutting upper arm and lower arm, and

each floor support is sized and constructed to support batteries that are electric self-propelled vehicle batteries having gas recombination sealed elements and sized for serving as a source of electric motive power for a vehicle; and

two end plates (28, 30) secured to respective ends of the two side walls, at least one of the two end plates being attached removably to allow for the batteries to be horizontally

placed in or removed from each horizontal level, the two side walls being connected to each other only by said end plates,

each end plate provided with vertically spaced apart fixing lugs (32) secured to the wall elements (18, 20), each end plate including a different fixing lug for each wall element (18, 20) such that each of the two end plates is secured, via a different one of the fixing lugs, to one end of every wall element (18, 20).

10. (cancelled).

11. (previously presented) Box according to claim 9, characterized in that it also comprises battery retention means (38).

12. (previously presented) Box according to claim 11, characterized in that the retention means comprise a removable rod (38) extending through the folded edges (22, 24) of the stacked wall elements.

13. (cancelled).

14. (currently amended) Box according to claim [[13]] 9, characterized in that the end plates are provided with openings (34) for the ventilation of the battery elements.

15. (currently amended) Box according to claim [[13]]
9, characterized in that the end plates are each provided with a
handling point (36) for engagement by a lifting appliance.

16. (previously presented) System of boxes for a set of
electric storage batteries, characterized in that it consists of
an assembly of boxes (10) according to claim 9.

17-22. (cancelled)

23. (previously presented) The box of claim 9, wherein,
the electric self-propelled vehicle batteries deliver a voltage
of the order of 2 volts.

24. (previously presented) The box of claim 9, wherein,
the electric self-propelled vehicle batteries are for a
maintenance machine vehicle.

25. (cancelled).

26. (previously presented) The box of claim 9, further
comprising:

the electric self-propelled vehicle batteries having
gas recombination sealed elements, the batteries sized for
serving as a source of electric motive power for the vehicle,

each floor support supporting plural of the electric
self-propelled vehicle batteries stored therebetween.

27. (cancelled).

28. (currently amended) A box for receiving a set of electric storage batteries providing a power source for an electric self-propelled vehicle including a maintenance machine, the batteries having gas recombination sealed elements, comprising:

two side walls (12, 14) spaced apart by an intervening air space and extending generally parallel and defining between the two side walls a housing in which the batteries are placed,

the side walls comprising an assembly of interchangeable vertically stacked elementary modules (16), each elementary module comprising a pair of wall elements (18, 20) mounted opposite each other in an assembled condition and arranged to provide an overall volume of the box adapted to a number of batteries carried on respective ones of plural horizontal levels and reduce an amount of unoccupied free space,

the wall elements are in the form of U sections directly stacked one on another,

upper arms of the opposing wall elements contact the lower arms of a vertically adjacent wall element,

lower arms (24) of the opposing wall elements (18, 20) together forming at least part of a support designed to receive a row of the batteries on one of the horizontal levels,

upper arms of the opposing wall elements contacting the lower arms of a vertically adjacent wall element and thereby providing that at least some of the horizontal levels with a battery support comprised the contacting lower and upper arms,
wherein,

edges of the lower arms of each wall element are separated from each other by the intervening air space so that the edges of the lower arms support each battery by opposite base edges of the battery with a base area of the battery between the opposite edges unsupported and exposed to the intervening air space, each side wall being free of contact with the other side wall, and

the edges of each of the lowers arms are constructed to support a set of the electric storage batteries that provide the power source for electric self-propelled vehicles including maintenance machines, the batteries having gas recombination sealed elements;

two end plates (28, 30) attached to free ends of the side walls (12, 14),

one of the two end plates being attached removably to the corresponding free end to allow for the batteries to be horizontally placed in or removed from each elementary module at the corresponding free end; and

fixing lugs (32) extending from each end plate, the fixing lugs being vertically spaced apart and arranged in pairs

with each free end of each elementary module (16) attached to a corresponding different one of the lugs.

29. (cancelled).

30. (cancelled).

31. (currently amended) The box of claim [[29]] 28,
wherein,

dimensions of the end plates (28, 30) space the wall elements (18, 20) of each elementary module (16) in such a way that the ends of edges (24) of the wall elements (18, 20) are spaced apart by a distance shorter than the length or width of the batteries.

32. (currently amended) The box of claim [[29]] 28,
further comprising:

ventilation openings (34) in the end plates (28, 30)
to allow ventilation of the batteries placed in the box; and

a handling point (36) in an upper part of each end plate designed to engage with a lifting appliance for raising and lowering the box when carrying the batteries.

33. (currently amended) The box of claim [[29]] 28,
further comprising:

a battery retaining element located in each side wall (12, 14) and extending through each wall element (18, 20) of a respective side wall (12, 14), the battery retaining element configured to retain the batteries in a respective elementary module (16).

34. (currently amended) The box of claim 33, wherein, the battery retaining element is a rod (38) inserted into orifices (40) formed in folded edges (22, 24) of the wall elements, ~~and~~

~~the wall elements are in the form of U sections directly stacked one on another, and~~

~~upper arms of the opposing wall elements contact the lower arms of an adjacent wall element.~~